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A national teachers union offers a program for educational improvement in urban schools, the More Effective Schools Project. The document presents the recommendations of the American Federation of Teachers on size of school and class, administration and supervision, and other professional matters. Proposals are also made for the areas of school supplies, the education of the malfunctioning child, community involvement, school integration, and program evaluation. (NH)

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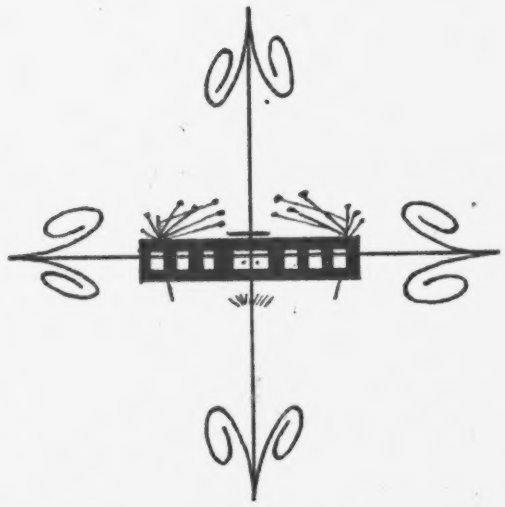

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The National Council for Effective Schools

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A Tentative Summary Report for an Effective School Program in Urban Centers

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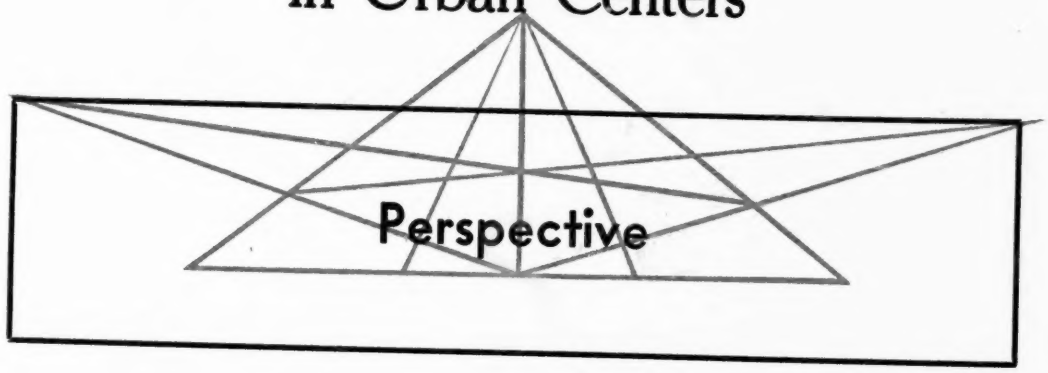
An Effective School Program in Urban Centers



The crisis of inadequate urban schools is nationwide. The convergence of disadvantaged populations in slum areas, the lack of socio-economic opportunities, the marginal cultural experiences, as well as the exposure to impoverished schools, perpetuate and further precipitate a host of social evils.

The schools are the only social agency to which all of the children of our multi-ethnic population are exposed. It is here where we should provide opportunities for intellectual challenge, integrated relationships, and cultural and emotional enrichment.

In view of our economic wealth and our great reservoirs of knowledge, we are spending relatively less on our schools than many poorer countries. Schools today lack the commitment necessary to fulfill basic educational needs. The gap is widening at a tragic pace because of the tempo of current social change. This is where we have come after a hundred and fifty years of democratic education.

There are controlling basic components essential to all educational systems. The omission of any threatens the minimal adequacy of all. What the AFT here proposes is not revolutionary. It is simply a reaffirmation of the integral elements of any school system which aims to be educational rather than custodial. What exists now in most urban centers is an extensive deficit in the essentials necessary to any educational system. Teachers cannot work under such conditions without

violating their integrity as professional educators.

Is it unreasonable to ask for:

1. A seat and a desk for every child for a full school day?

2. A building of viable size? Giant schools magnify within their walls the impersonal regimentation and crowding which are so oppressively a feature of modern urban life. Can we not create within the school a small world where children feel safe? Where there is a room for every class and every rightful activity?

3. A class small enough so that every child can receive the individual attention necessary for learning and growth? Is not informed adult support a condition for the cultivation of curiosity, a prerequisite for learning and development?

4. A policy of selecting supervisors who are sensitive to the needs of these children, their community, and their teachers, and respectful of their potential?

5. A system of providing efficiently, adequately, and promptly those supplies necessary for a well-functioning curriculum?

6. A pupil-staff ratio that allows for a sufficient number of specialized personnel, librarians, psychologists, social workers, counselors, reading experts, in a peer-team relationship with teachers in meeting a common challenge?

7. A range of services specially designed to recognize the many factors which contribute to the malfunctioning of children and to develop new programs for rehabilitation? Does not the lack of these services generate a rising clamor for more punitive controls and for the exclusion of children? The disruptive actions of these children are only intelligible when seen as a symptomatic defense against intolerable conditions in the school and the larger community.

8. A democratic framework that elicits the genuine involvement of the teachers in formulating and developing a climate appropriate to these children?

9. Recognition that the school can no longer afford to be an alien island in an urban village? Leadership by Boards of Education in mobilizing the immediate school community for a bootstrap operation? More extensive opportunities for parents, neighbors, and school personnel to meet at home and in school, to be exposed to each other's personalities and aspirations? Is it not conceivable that this might lead to a mutuality of understanding and trust which is basic to effective education?

10. A plan aiming at totally integrated schools that would give all our children the opportunity to learn about and live with children of a wide variety of national, religious, ethnic, and cultural heritages? Can we not take advantage of this educationally favorable climate to help our children develop a world without prejudice?

11. A curriculum less invested with middle class values and accents, and more respectful of the current meaningful realities and strengths of our multi-faceted population?

Well-meaning spokesmen, trying to meet the crisis, do battle for one component or another of a sound school system. They may struggle for experienced teachers or smaller classes or a full school day for every child. Each of these components is unquestionably important; but a school is a unit whose health is indivisible. All essential elements must operate simultaneously or none will prove fruitful.

If sound conditions for education are established, the children will learn. If teachers are given a professional challenge, they will respond like other professionals. They will rise to meet the challenge. They will seek to further their own understanding.

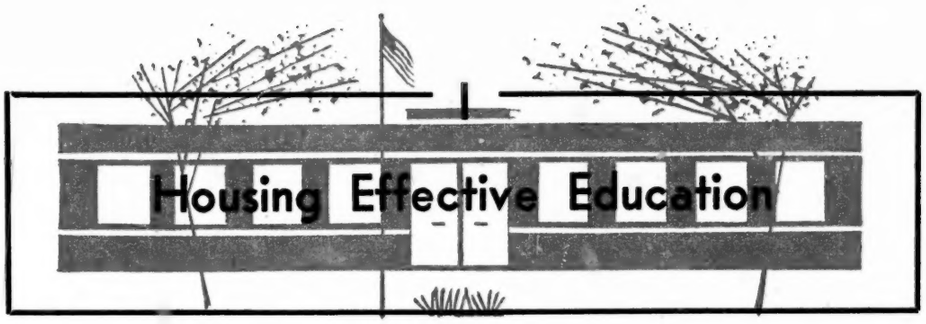
The reconstruction of inadequate school systems throughout the country is an enormous job, too large for substantial solution on a local basis. It is essential that Federal and state governments become involved. Urban educational systems, can, however, start this program in a few schools in September. Success would create its own momentum for extension. Nothing less will work.

We believe that a school system, like every social institution, has an elastic potential for better or worse. A better school system can make a major contribution to the community as a social solvent.

We believe that this program can effectively reduce academic disabilities, educational frustration, delinquency, and drop-outs more than any investment in additional special services.

The More Effective Schools Project is offered by the American Federation of Teachers as a feasible program. We believe that it is not only theoretically sound, but practically effective, and therefore propose rapid annual expansion until there are no more substandard schools. While no single element in the program can in itself assure success, lack of any of these elements is a guarantee of failure. In this sense each is essential.

A responsible Board of Education must assume leadership, in the solution of this problem, in partnership with the staff, to give the teaching staff and the community reasonable hope of success and to inspire them to renewed enthusiasm.



In a large school, children are apt to be herded and regimented. In a small school, children can have personal relationships with all members of the staff with whom they have contact. Teachers feel responsible for their children's progress and take pride in their individual achievement and the achievement of the school as a whole.

The New York State Department of Education recommends a school population of four to eight hundred pupils in 14 to 28 classes. A nationwide survey of educators sets a figure of 800 pupils as the most effective.

Faced with the reality of meeting the needs of the children in seriously inadequate schools we propose to accept the figure of 1,000 as the upper limit. It is our position that, through drastic reorganization, these inadequate buildings can serve as a base for effective education.

We must insist, however, on sufficient room within the building to afford a seat for each of these 1,000 children and a room for each class. In addition, space is essential for special services for the physically, intellectually, and socially maladjusted pupils, and for the supportive services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) **Schools should have adequate facilities for 800 to 1,000 pupils, with provision for every needed special service.**
2) **If a school has a population in excess of the number which can be effectively housed, the excess children should be transferred and provision made for them elsewhere by one of the following procedures.**
   a. redistricting
   b. bussing children to under-utilized schools

c. installing demountable units on an emergency basis until more permanent housing can be built

d. constructing classrooms in available unutilized space in existing school buildings

e. using space in housing projects for extra classrooms

f. setting up classrooms in commercial buildings.

II
Class Size

"The pedagogic tasks which confront teachers in the slum schools are far more difficult than those which their colleagues in the wealthy suburbs face.

"Yet in the suburbs there is likely to be a spacious modern school staffed by as many as 70 professionals per 1,000 pupils: in the slum one finds a crowded, often dilapidated and unattractive school staffed by 40 or fewer professionals per 1,000 pupils.

"The contrast challenges any complacency we may have about our method of financing public schools."

—*Slums and Suburbs, James B. Conant*

Every child has the right to a dependent relationship with adults. Too many of our children in the special service schools have been deprived of this childhood right because class sizes have been much too large and supporting services too meager.

Unless this right is returned to them, their educational progress will be severely limited. Bonuses for teachers will not return this right.

Grant the children an adequate number of professional adults on whom to depend, and you grant them the right to

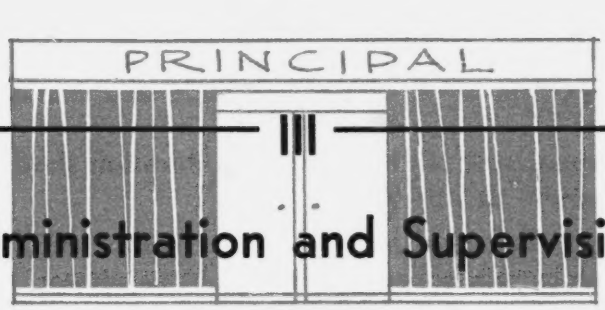
be curious, which is the basis of learning. For the first time the adults will have the opportunity to see the children as individuals and to build curriculum tailored to the needs of the individual and the group.

In the light of the tremendous growth of curriculum orientations derived from many disciplines, effective education is a function of an appropriately small class size.

If class registers were lowered and the classroom teacher were supported by an adequate number of consultants, creating a child-adult ratio of at most 12 to one, the children of these schools might come into their own. Any higher ratio would be ineffective.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) **Class size should not be larger than 18 to 22 and, where indicated, no larger than 15 or less.**
2) **The overall child-adult ratio should not be greater than 12 children to one professional adult.**



III

Administration and Supervision

"(Principals) and their assistants are frequently busied in routine clerical, supply, and repair work to the point where they are unable to provide adequate supervision over instruction. Too often they are pressed by their burdens into using their assistants and even their teachers for routine tasks that could well be performed by less professionally qualified persons." —*The Instructional Program in the Public Schools of New York City, New York State Education Department.*

The success of this program will depend largely on the

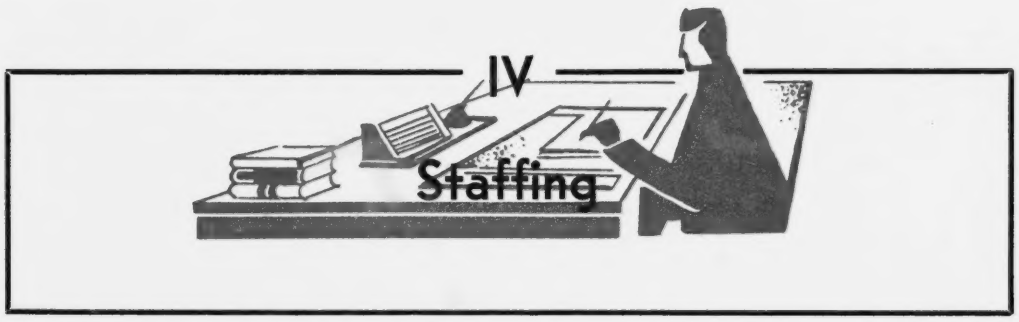
character of the principal chosen for each of the ten schools. To head each of these schools successfully, we need a supervisor who can understand under-privileged children and their families, who is sensitive to their needs, problems, aspirations, and frustrations; who is highly skilled in intergroup and interpersonal relations; who is emotionally mature, whose own security is not threatened by an expression of disagreement from the faculty, the children, or the community; who believes in his program strongly enough to resist any attempt to water it down.

He must be a person of genuinely sophisticated professional attainments, who keeps abreast of new developments in the field of education and related disciplines. He should be a person who can inspire trust and confidence in the children, the parents, and the teachers with whom he will work.

Once we have chosen such a principal we must not permit him to be buried in routine clerical, supply, and repair work. An administrative assistant should be provided to insure the principal's freedom to supervise and improve instruction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) **A subcommittee of the Board of Education should be designated to supervise this program.**
2) **A committee consisting of a psychiatrist or a psychologist, a sociologist, and a supervisor should be chosen to interview and recommend principals for the pilot schools. This committee should set up criteria for choice, in the light of principles set forth above.**
3) **To insure sympathetic supervision in the upper echelons, the same committee should be constituted as a standing committee permanently available to assist the principals.**
4) **In a large school system these schools should be designated as a tentatively autonomous school district, and placed under the authority of a single field superintendent.**
5) **Each school should have an administrative assistant whose primary interest is in the management aspects of this program, to free the principal for greater participation in the educational aspects of the program.**



"There are thousands upon thousands of devoted, hard-working professionals in the New York City school system. They are struggling against incredible odds to provide education of high quality to children in their care." —*The Instructional Program in the Public Schools of New York City, New York State Education Department,* 1962.

An extremely important factor in the teachers' unwillingness to remain in the special service schools is the frustrating nature of the task under present conditions. Make the conditions such that real learning is seen to be going on, and the flight of teachers from these schools will be reversed.

Under ideal conditions we would ask for the screening of teachers for these schools, using the same criteria we have set down for principals. However, it is unrealistic to consider restaffing these schools completely.

We should therefore plan on retaining the present staff and rely upon a wide campaign to attract volunteers elsewhere.

Many teachers would be willing to volunteer if they were assured that: 1) Viable conditions for teaching were being created; 2) Provisions were made for genuine participation by the faculty in the solution of the school problems; 3) Criticism could be made without fear of retaliation, even in the most subtle form, and 4) Teachers would have the right at the end of the first year to return to their home schools if, in either their own opinion or that of the principal, they cannot work freely, happily, and effectively with the children and the community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) **Guarantees should be given that if either principal or teacher finds, by the end of the first year, that the teacher is not suited to work in this school situation, there will be a transfer, without prejudice, back to the home school or to any school with a vacancy which is agreeable to the teacher.**
2) **Guarantees should be given that if, at the end of the year, either teacher or principal requests a transfer, there shall be one, without prejudice, back to the home school or to any school with a vacancy which is agreeable to the person requesting the transfer.**

V

Democratic Staff Involvement

It is essential that the staff take an active part in formulating the direction in which the program shall move. Genuine involvement of the teachers can result only from the opportunity to help work out ways of resolving the many professional issues which face them, *e.g.,* selection of teaching aids, preparation of course materials, utilization of resource personnel, and formulation of plans for individual children.

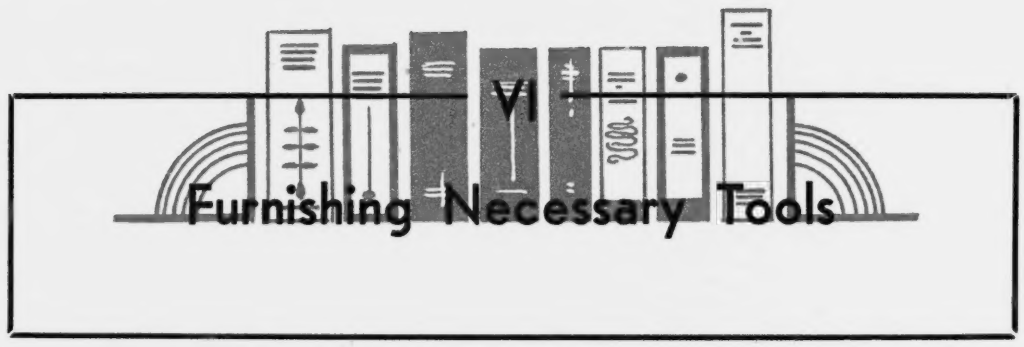
Experience has shown that it is essential to set up machinery for such involvement of the faculty, as partners with the school administration in developing an effective educational program for the children. The assumption of such a role would act as a major instrument in further identifying teachers with the school, resulting in even greater loyalty and creativity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) **Teachers in each school should be invited to work closely with the principal in formulating school policy.**
2) **Provide time during the school day for conferences of teachers**

with other teachers, with administrators, and with specialized personnel.

3) The ratio of professional personnel to children should be adequate to permit such conferences without depriving the children of instructional time.



Our schools have been on a starvation diet of few books and less supplies. The lack of books, supplies, and other curriculum materials has been a major factor in the steady erosion of both teacher and pupil morale. In the special service schools the inventories faded while the learning deficit piled up.

If we are to reverse this process, we must increase the budget to meet unfilled needs, so as to create conditions which will stimulate learning and attract faculty. There should also be an allowance for use in emergencies, at the discretion of the principal, similar to sums contributed by Parents Associations in more favored areas.

Exploratory teaching materials should be made available to the schools, and curriculum assistants should be assigned. Moreover, an orderly flow of supplies to the school, and within the school, must be insured. These should be readily available to teachers upon request.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) **Make provision in the budget to meet all the needs of children and teachers for books, supplies, audio-visual materials, etc.**

2) **Set up a central depot for these schools, with a representative of the Bureau of Supplies to act as expediter, to insure a steady flow of supplies to the pilot schools.**

3) **Treat the school allotment as a charge account, allowing for weekly orders and deliveries, with monthly statements rendered, to be checked with school records. This will eliminate the unconscionable gap which now exists between order and delivery.**
4) **Set up a center in each school for experimental teaching materials, including paperback books.**
5) **Assign school aides to make needed supplies available to teachers at all times during the school day.**

VII 1 X 400
Relationship of Teachers and Specialized Personnel

It is suggested that the "team approach" be applied to the consideration of the relationship between the teacher and specialized personnel. The team concept requires the bringing together of representatives of related disciplines in a peer relationship, meeting on a regular basis, around common problems, with similar goals.

Thus, specialized personnel (curriculum coordinators, psychologists, counselors, social workers, psychiatrists, *et al.*) should work on a sustained team basis with the teacher, focusing on the potential of the group as well as the individual child for furthering the educational goals.

Moreover, instead of the traditional "face-to-face"' relationship between the individual child and the clinician (psychologist, social worker, or psychiatrist), the emphasis would be on meeting the child through the counselor and through the teacher, in a supportive, peer relationship with both.

The team approach would require time for periodic conferences. Our program provides sufficient professional personnel to allow conference time without depriving the chil-

dren of instructional time. It also would require arranging for supplementary training beyond the professional-competency level of the disciplines involved. (We anticipate that one of the outcomes of such a training program would be a "crossing" of traditional lines.)

Provisions for the orientation of school aides must be included in the training program to help insure educationally appropriate utilization of their skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) **Provide specialized personnel in sufficient numbers to give assistance within the classroom, and to participate as team members in the exploration of curriculum areas.**
2) **There should be at least one full-time counselor for each 400 pupils. This is higher than the 250 recommended by the Federal government, but it is a realistic figure with other aids provided.**
3) **One psychologist-social worker-psychiatrist team for two schools, with each member of the team being responsible for one school, and on call for the other.**
4) **A workshop-type training program for all, including school aides.**
5) **Within the basic structure of the school program, provision for conference time, including time for meetings of specialized personnel with teachers.**

VIII

Educating the Malfunctioning Child

The malfunctioning pupil is one of the major factors responsible for the inexperienced and transient character of the staff in the special service school. By the malfunctioning child we mean the educationally disabled, the socially disruptive, or the emotionally disturbed child.

There is reason to believe that the high incidence of these

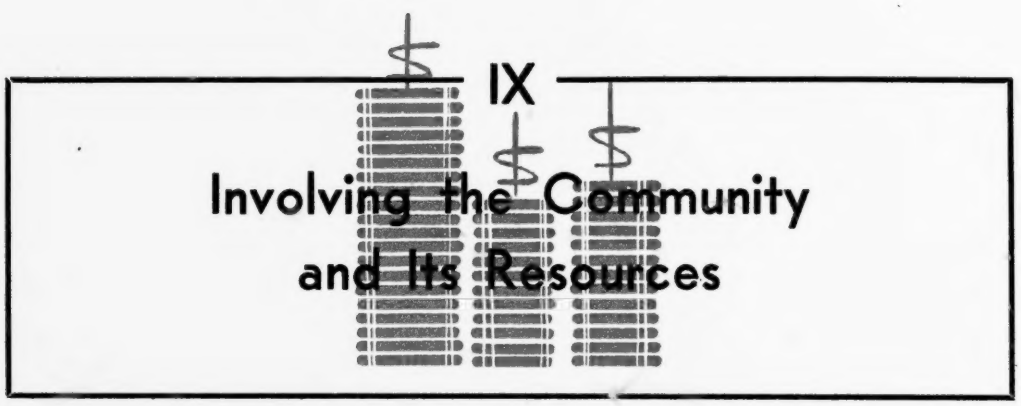
children in the special service schools is a symptom of the general failure of our city to provide an appropriate educational context for these youngsters.

This is not to ignore, as important causal factors in maladaptive behavior, the non-school determinants, but to reorient our expectancies of the schools as our most viable instrument in the lives of these children.

The primary aim, therefore, of our program for the malfunctioning child is to place the necessary means for working with these youngsters in the hands of the local school, where contact with a normal situation would be maintained, and where social ties based on mutual responsibility are strengthened.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) **Provide effective clinical and guidance support, with emphasis on setting up an educational program for the school staff.**
2) **Provide a therapeutic program for the malfunctioning child, resting on an individual case study, based on a pooling of information gathered from educational, clinical, guidance and familial sources.**
3) **Provide a hospital-connected pediatric service with opportunity for a thorough physical examination for each malfunctioning child and provision for complete follow-up.**
4) **Set up a Junior Guidance track (small special classes of disturbed children carefully organized on a therapeutic basis) in each of these schools.**
5) **Plan for greater involvement of clinical-guidance services in existing classes for the exceptional child, the mentally retarded, the visually impaired, the physically limited, et cetera, since the overwhelming majority of children in this category suffer from associated emotional problems.**
6) **Insure more extensive educational opportunities by providing after-school and evening recreation programs, supervised after-school study and remedial facilities, weekend activities, and summer camp experiences for both children and parents.**
7) **Make a clinical and counseling program mandatory for state hospital returnees, designed to provide appropriate screening and placement before return to school, and sustained follow-up.**
8) **Provide other placement facilities for those children who are found, after a careful evaluation by clinicians and educators, to be so disturbed and damaged as to be unable to profit from a regular school program.**



IX

Involving the Community and Its Resources

Schools must guard against isolation from the community. We dare not encourage the cultural alienation which has created, between disadvantaged children and their parents, such tragic hostility, directed both at themselves and society.

The immediate school community must be mobilized for a bootstrap operation. This entails using Federal, state, municipal, and neighborhood resources to provide for satisfying patterns of life and work.

More extensive opportunities for parents, neighbors, and school personnel to meet at home and in school, to be exposed to each other's personalities and aspirations, might lead to a mutuality of understanding and trust which is basic for effective education.

Every neighborhood now has social agencies of all kinds that are working in isolation and even, perhaps, at cross-purposes with one another. These agencies, including the public school, should be coordinated into a comprehensive neighborhood plan.

Local leadership groups, especially the local school board, should be intimately involved in the development and implementation of the plan.

Unless the school and the school board are not only willing to accept criticism without becoming defensive, but even to take the lead in exposing the inadequacies of our school system, there will be no genuine involvement on the part of the parents and the community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) **The school should facilitate frequent meetings of parents and school personnel, individually and in small groups.**
2) **The school should take the lead in developing a comprehensive neighborhood plan, involving the entire community and the social agencies serving it.**
3) **Boards of Education should assume leadership on probing the inequities of our schools. It should welcome the cooperation of teacher and community groups and their constant critical evaluation.**
4) **Boards of Education should encourage the search for additional funds from the Federal, state, and municipal governments, and from private foundations.**

Integrating Effective Schools

In approaching the question of the so-called "difficult to staff" schools, we must recognize that most of them fall into this category because they are *de facto* segregated schools, reflecting the problems and evils of the ghetto that feeds them. As we work toward upgrading these schools, we must, simultaneously, work toward integrating them. Otherwise, we are working toward the creation of good segregated schools. Such schools, however successful, are still handicapped by the problems inherent in segregation; and the results, for teacher and pupil alike, are never as great as they would be without the handicap of segregation.

Therefore, the following recommendations are submitted, in the subject-areas under consideration:

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) As redistricting, rezoning and new construction proceed, under this plan, priority consideration must be given to the possibilities of achieving the greatest possible degree of physical desegregation of the student bodies of all the schools affected.

2) One of the serious problems of our segregated system today is that children seldom have the opportunity to see members of minority groups in socially acceptable positions of authority. The minority group child needs this experience to aid in the creation of feelings of self-worth, and the identification with authority figures. The child of the so-called majority must have such exposure to serve as an important ingredient in the formation of positive rather than negative attitudes toward those who are different from himself. Therefore, it is important that a conscious effort be made to integrate the staff at all levels.

3) The desegregated student body and staff will not produce the desired result in terms of an integrated educational experience unless the curriculum and teaching materials reflect both the historical contributions and the day-to-day participation in our society of all groups. Such materials are available, and the necessary extra effort must be expended to acquire them. It may be advisable to set up a special curriculum committee which will include teachers, similar to the committee on staffing, to recommend and supervise the required changes.

4) In view of past alienation of school and community in minority group areas, this is an especially important and sensitive area of concern. It will be important to guarantee that those people on the staff who are involved in any way in community contact be properly and thoroughly prepared, through in-service training courses, special workshops in human relations, et cetera, prior to assuming their duties. It is important, also, that the community be well informed and involved from the beginning in the changes being made and the reasons for them. Such efforts to inform and prepare teachers, supervisors, and the community should also be inaugurated in those areas in which non-special service schools are located.

XI

Providing for On-Going Evaluation and Adjustment of the Program

As in the case of any responsible part of the school system, it is reasonable to expect that there will be periodic evaluations of the curriculum, program, methods, relation to other parts of the school system, et cetera.

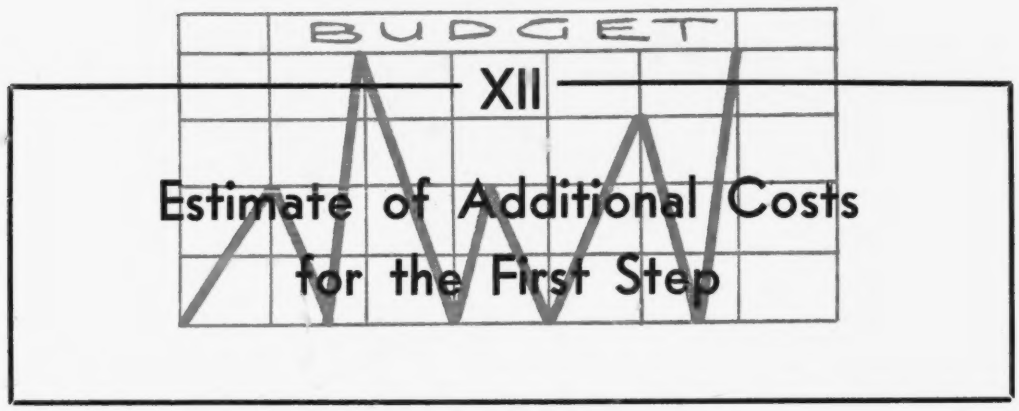
We recognize the necessity for building into these schools, from their inception, the personnel and funds needed for the continuous study and evaluation of the entire program by a body other than the one administering the program.

This is an essential prerequisite for the careful accumulation of the materials necessary for a sound evaluation. It is essential that what is done here should be reported to the appropriate professional and official bodies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) **Provide research specialists from an outside agency for the schools, to formulate and apply appropriate research criteria for the evaluation of the program.**

2) **Make appropriate adjustments based upon these evaluations.**



XII

Estimate of Additional Costs for the First Step

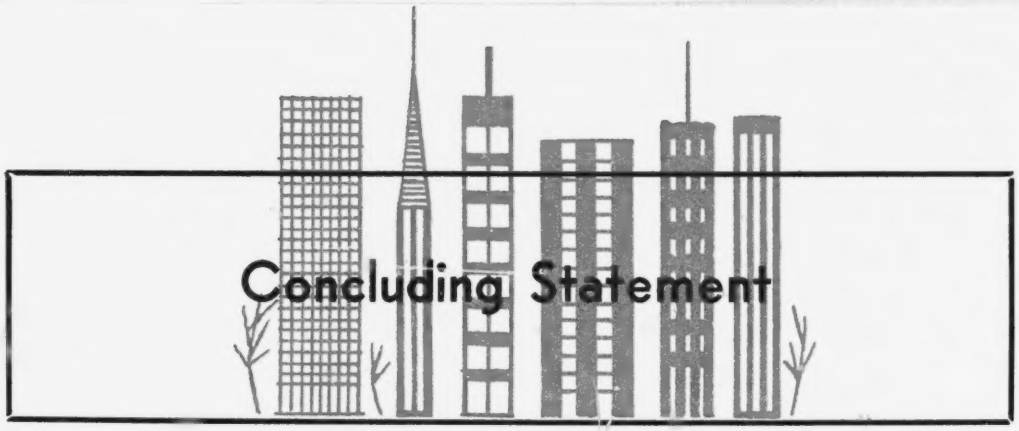
"Public education is facing a crisis today. Unless proper measures are taken in a quantity sufficient in magnitude to meet the challenges, dire consequences may result. The persisting and nagging shortages of qualified teachers, plant facilities and budgetary appropriations — with their consequent impact upon quality education for a vastly increasing quantity of a heterogeneous student population — may prove in the long run to be the Achilles heel of our nation." —*Staffing Our Schools Today and Tomorrow, New York City Board of Education,* 1960.

Budgetary appropriations have been far below the minimum needs of our school system year after year. In order to make up the backlog and make a new start in our blighted urban educational areas, we must recognize that tremendously increased efforts and expenditures will be necessary.

The budget must make adequate provision for teachers, classrooms, books, supplies, and the continuing development of know-how.

Additional classrooms, demountable units, temporary housing, structural changes in the buildings selected for the program, costs of bussing children to under-utilized schools, all of which measures may be necessary to reduce the populations of the selected schools to feasible proportions, would have to be provided for from the capital budget or other sources.

There are too many variables to permit an estimate. It is possible that in some schools no additional costs for these purposes would arise.



Concluding Statement

This design for Effective Schools should be considered tentative and minimal. There are important areas left out: Early Childhood Education, emphasizing the new developments in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten education; teacher training for urban education; an on-going staff retraining program; orientation of staff; recruitment; use of staff, evaluation, financing, et cetera.

It is the hope of the committee, some of whose members helped to design the basic New York City Plan, that each school system may find the proposed AFT design and the New York City Plan of some value in developing their own design to fit their specific local needs.

One fact must be recognized by all concerned with the plight of American urban education: the time for carefully planned and asserted action to improve our urban schools is now. We cannot and dare not wait.

* * * *

*** The tentative summary report is based largely on the plan drawn up by the United Federation of Teachers and which was the prototype for the More Effective Schools program now in operation in New York City in ten selected elementary schools. Ten additional elementary schools will use this program beginning Sept., 1965.**

**** The New York City's program for More Effective Schools was drawn up by a joint committee consisting of an equal number of representatives from the Office of the Superintendent of Schools, the United Federation of Teachers (AFT), and the Council of Supervisory Associations. This committee was officially appointed by the school superintendent to study the proposals made by the UFT. All changes, improvements, and the inclusions of many significant specifics had to be acceptable to all three cooperating groups. The committee consulted with and sought the advice from many organizations and leaders in the areas under consideration.**

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